

February 5, 2003

TO: Directors, State Agricultural Experiment Stations
A-TR's, McIntire-Stennis Programs
Research Directors, Evans-Allen Programs
Deans, Schools of Veterinary Medicine
Directors, Cooperative Extension
Extension Administrators
Academic Deans

FROM: Cheryl J. Oros /s/
Director
Office of Planning & Accountability

SUBJECT: **Program Review Plans for Fiscal Year 2004 - October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2004**

The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is seeking university program review requests for **October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2004**. While program reviews are voluntary on the part of eligible institutions, we believe they are important in assessing current strengths, identifying future opportunities and recommending appropriate strategies for enhancing university based programs. The Agency believes that the review of programs has: 1) had a positive impact on land-grant program quality; 2) provided Federal staff with a realistic understanding of the dynamics of programs and program change; 3) encouraged program advancement for those undergoing the review; 4) exposed review team members to new ideas in program management and resource utilization; and 5) provided CSREES with current and comprehensive information used for responding to Congressional inquiries related to the use of Federal funds in supporting excellence in research, extension, and higher education programming.

In recent years, most program reviews have been comprehensive and focused on all activities (i.e., research, education and extension) in the department or unit being reviewed. CSREES is committed to continuing the emphasis on comprehensive reviews, where appropriate to university needs. In addition, we are encouraging issue-based reviews which involve collaborative units and cooperative activities. This reflects the Federal emphasis on high-priority problems and issues while reviewing current resources and future needs, and also considering the needs of constituents. It is our hope that program reviews will cross the traditional disciplinary boundaries that have not typically been associated with the review process. With the reorganization of CSREES headquarters staff in Washington, and the need to efficiently use state, Federal and other resources, we expect that the review process will assess research, extension and education activities to meet the needs of the state, regions, and the Nation.

Recognizing the mutual benefit derived from the review process, CSREES will pay the travel costs for fifty percent of the review team, up to a maximum of three team members (including the CSREES team leader).

As we continue to improve the review of programs, we ask that the requesting institution provide CSREES with the background information noted on the attached request form for each unit or program to be reviewed during the period October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2004. Priority will be given to interdisciplinary, integrated issue reviews. Should you wish to provide this information in a different format, please feel free to do so, as long as you respond to the pertinent issues. The information provided will be used by CSREES as the initial point for discussions with you in planning and scheduling the review and assigning a CSREES team leader.

The review requests should be returned to CSREES by **April 30, 2003**, to be considered for the FY 2004 review cycle. Requests not received in this time line will be deferred until the FY 2005 cycle. We will notify you of the reviews that will be conducted and the name of the CSREES Team Leader by **June 30, 2003**.

Review requests should be sent to:

Rosa L. Monroe
 USDA/CSREES/Planning & Accountability
 STOP-2214
 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
 Washington, DC 20250-2214
 Telephone: (202) 720-5285
 Fax: (202) 720-4730
 E-mail: rmonroe@reeusda.gov

In addition to the Program Reviews described above, CSREES is able to assist institutions through the conduct of Civil Rights Reviews and Financial Compliance Reviews. Information on Civil Rights Reviews can be obtained from Mr. Curtiland Deville and Financial Reviews from Mr. Phillip Carter. Questions concerning these reviews can be directed as follows:

Mr. Curtiland Deville, Director
 USDA/CSREES/Equal Opportunity Staff
 STOP-2296
 1400 Independence Ave., SW
 Washington, DC 20250
 Telephone: (202) 720-2700
 E-mail: cdeville@reeusda.gov

Mr. Phillip Carter, Policy Advisor
 USDA/CSREES/Office of
 Extramural Programs
 STOP-2295
 1400 Independence Ave., SW
 Washington, DC 20250
 Telephone: (202) 401-6309
 E-mail: pcarter@reeusda.gov

Where appropriate, CSREES would accept requests to combine program and Civil Rights reviews.

Program reviews can be an important element of our agency plan to measure the quality, relevance and usefulness of programs conducted with Federal support. We look forward to supporting requests for the FY 2004 period and to ongoing discussions with you about the role of reviews in our system's overall strategy for accountability.

Direct questions concerning Program Reviews can be sent to me via E-mail at coros@reeusda.gov, or by phone at (202) 720-5623.

Attachment

